

# ***IOWA OUTDOORS***

**Iowa Department of Natural Resources**  
**[www.iowadnr.gov](http://www.iowadnr.gov)**

Editor: Mick Klemesrud, 515/281-8653  
[mick.klemesrud@dnr.state.ia.us](mailto:mick.klemesrud@dnr.state.ia.us)

\*\*\*\*\*

**July 2, 2007**

1. Major Campground Improvements Underway at Lake Macbride State Park
2. Summer Boating – by Joe Wilkinson
3. Beat the Heat; Christmas in July
4. New Kids-only Trout Fishing Pond Opens at Big Spring Hatchery

## **MAJOR CAMPGROUND IMPROVEMENTS UNDERWAY AT LAKE MACBRIDE STATE PARK**

SOLON – The campground at Lake Macbride State Park is closed to undergo a major facelift and once the work is completed, campers will barely recognize their old friend.

“It is always difficult to do major renovations because we have to shut the campground down to get the work done,” said Kevin Szcodronski, chief of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources state parks bureau. “In the case of Lake Macbride, we kept the campground open for Memorial Day Weekend, but had to sacrifice the Fourth of July and Labor Day holidays to get the work done before winter.”

The Lake Macbride project includes removing the old shower building and placing a new shower building at the same location. It includes installing a new sanitary sewer system, a new water supply and drinking water treatment building, new fire rings and upgrading electrical service at each campsite to 50 amps. Camping pads and new living spaces will be rock surfaced for each of the 40 electrical sites.

The project calls for making 12 sites available with full hookups – water and sewer connections along with electricity. The new full hookup sites will cost \$19 per night, \$3 more than sites with electricity only.

The project costs are estimated at \$550,000 and is scheduled to finish Oct. 31.

**For more information, contact Szcodronski at 515-281-8674 or staff at Lake Macbride State Park at 319-624-2200.**

###

## **SUMMER BOATING**

By Joe Wilkinson

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

A typical violation. A typical response.

“We just bought the boat a week ago. I didn’t know it was illegal,” was the reason given by the pontoon owner, for plowing by our well marked ‘Law Enforcement’ patrol boat at near full speed, Saturday afternoon on the Coralville Reservoir. From about 75 feet away, on the crowded lake, he was well within the 100-foot zone requiring him to slow down, when meeting a slow-moving, oncoming boat.

In addition to a ticket, Department of Natural Resources conservation officer Shawn Meier handed him a copy of Iowa’s boating regulations; something available at the county recorder’s office where the title was transferred, as well as in marinas and tackle shops. “Speed and distance (infractions) are still a pretty substantial share of the violations we see here and across Iowa,” underscored Meier. “The biggest reason we enforce them is simply because we don’t want accidents. When boats get that close, you’re (eventually) going to have collisions.”

By late that evening, his warning was eerily prophetic. “We nearly watched a bad accident happen. The guy didn’t even see (the other boat). He didn’t even see us,” recalled Meier. The boater was tested for blood alcohol level, but did not cross the drunk boater threshold. Two other boaters were tested on the ‘night shift.’ “Alcohol is still an issue. We want to keep drivers sober and boating safe,” reminded Meier. “The heat of the day, mixed with alcohol had a lot of tempers flaring at night.”

That emphasis on sober operators is part of the reason enforcement has stepped up on the Reservoir and other high traffic boating areas in Iowa. Besides full time officers on the water during peak periods, the DNR has three summer officers in the area; and increase from two officers last year and one in 2005. And boat traffic should pick up between the ‘double weekend’ Fourth of July and the Labor Day holidays.

That crowd of inboards and outboards will soon have less water to share. As a flood control reservoir, water levels fluctuate with rainfall and downstream release of water. Coralville stood at just under 694 (feet above sea level) as we cruised it last weekend, on its way to a predicted mid-week crest of just over 695. That has meant hundreds of extra acres of ‘boatable’ water, lanes that dwindle as the lake drops to 686, its normal summer level.

If he had a vote, boater Don Schott of Cedar Rapids would leave it at the high water mark. “We have so much more room; especially below (Hwy. 218), more area to boat,” lobbied Schott. He had five teenage girls on board, celebrating a 15<sup>th</sup> birthday (Savannah’s). A quick safety check showed all the required equipment in place, after a couple life jackets were handed back to keep within reach. “We’re tubing, skiing; just relaxing and enjoying the sun,” said Schott. “We try to get out about ten times a summer. It’s not as often as we’d like.”

That pretty much echoed the overall attitude on the water. Most boaters were operating within regulations as they negotiated the flood-widened waters, pulled tubers or skiers, anchored in a side cove or opened up their high-performance engines to get some wind in their faces. Sun, waves, fatigue and alcohol, though, can combine to turn a day of fun into tragedy in a few short seconds.

With 240,000 registered boaters--all anxious to enjoy the summer weather--boaters have to be ‘heads up’ for what lies ahead and behind them on the water.

### **Staying Safe—and Legal—on the Water**

Even by early July, many boats are just hitting the water for the first or second time this summer. Most violations on the water can be avoided by having...

- *a properly fitting personal flotation device (PFD); a lifejacket, for each passenger.*
- *a throwable PFD on boats of over 16 feet*
- *a charged fire extinguisher*
- *a working horn, whistle or some other noise-making device*

...and by maintaining proper speed and distance. It is illegal to operate your vessel...

- *at greater than no wake speed in any posted ‘no wake’ zone*
- *at greater than 5 miles an hour (mph) within 100 feet of another vessel underway at 5 miles an hour or less*
- *at greater than 5 mph within 50 feet of another vessel underway at greater than 5 mph.*

While alcohol may be consumed on board by a (legal age) passenger or the boat operator, it is illegal to operate while intoxicated. In Iowa, this when that person is

- *under the influence of alcohol or other drug or a combination*
- *has a blood, breath or urine alcohol concentration of 0.10% or more*
- *has any amount of a controlled substance present in his/her system*

###

## **BEAT THE HEAT; CHRISTMAS IN JULY**

Campers at Backbone State Park can beat the summer heat with the sights and sounds of Christmas. The park will host its first annual 'Christmas in July,' July 20-21 at Backbone's 90-site South Lake Campground. "We just wanted to do something different," explains Backbone park manager Mary Shea. "We hope it will bring out the holiday spirit, not only in the campers but we hope local folks will drive through and take in the decorations, too."

Prizes will be awarded in different categories for the best decorated campsites. DNR parks bureau chief Kevin Sczodronski and state representative Roger Thomas will be judges. Winter games for kids and a visit from Santa Claus are scheduled for Saturday. A carriage ride through the campground is slated for Saturday, also. In case of no snow, the carriage will be equipped with wheels, not sleigh runners.

###

## **NEW KIDS-ONLY TROUT FISHING POND OPENS AT BIG SPRING HATCHERY**

A new kids-only trout fishing pond is now open to the public at Big Spring Trout Hatchery, near Elkader. This first-of-its-kind pond is an experimental program. The pond provides easy access and is an excellent fishing opportunity for young anglers (12 and under) hoping to catch that first fish.

It is also a way for parents to discover Iowa's trout program. The pond is stocked weekly with catchable-size rainbow trout and brook trout. Listed below are a few rules that apply in order for the kids' pond program to be successful. The most important of these rules is that each child needs to be accompanied by a licensed adult for safety reasons.

### **Kids Fishing Pond Rules:**

1. Pond is open to fishing for kids age 12 and under.
2. All kids **MUST** be accompanied by a licensed adult (fishing license + trout fee)
3. There is a 2 trout limit per child per day. (2 fish limit also applies to trout caught and released)
4. All trout kept must be part of the licensed adult's 5-trout limit, unless the child has their own trout privilege.
5. Artificial tackle must be used if kids intend to catch and release their 2 trout.

Other trout fishing opportunities at Big Spring include a new angler access trail along the Turkey River adjacent to the hatchery and a trout fishing pond at the entrance to the hatchery. The Turkey River is stocked 3 times per week and is currently in excellent

fishing condition. During the heat of the summer, mornings and evenings provide the most comfortable fishing.

**For further information contact Big Spring Hatchery at 563-245-2446.**

###